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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION, APRIL 7: WAR IN IRAQ

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Reportage on the war has a pronounced pro-coalition tone. Photos of smiling Iraqis greetings coalition forces and of a US soldier holding an Iraqi child appear in a number of dailies. Banner headlines announce the entry of US troops into Baghdad, proclaiming, "Liberation Comes Calling" and "End of the Age of the Palace... Beginning of A New Era."

One commentator believes that Arab anger at the US is justified, but that demonstrating in support of Iraq is against the interests of the Iraqi people and "only serves the current Iraqi regime and the coming American military presence." In an op/ed entitled "Whom To Believe?" a writer points out the differing opinions on the role of the UN in post-war Iraq expressed in recent British and US statements. END SUMMARY.

[1.](#) Despite the anger at Arab media portrayals of the war, one commentator writes that the televised image of American soldiers retreating from Al-Najaf when faced with a mob that mistakenly believed the troops were heading to occupy the mosque is a positive example of US respect for Muslims. Another accuses the US of conducting a "scorched earth policy" in the campaign in Iraq by deliberately targeting Iraq's infrastructure.

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[12.](#) News Stories: A senior American official told Al-Rai Al-Aam that American interrogators ask all Iraqi POWs about the whereabouts of Kuwaiti POWs.

All newspapers report on April 7 that the Criminal Court has begun deliberation on the case of Sami Al-Mutairi, the man who confessed to killing an American civilian contractor in an ambush on January 21.

Kuwait has sent 32 trucks to Al-Najaf loaded with 18,000 cartons of water, 121,000 meals, 10,000 blankets and medicine supplies as part of Kuwaiti humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, all newspapers report.

Al-Watan reports that a number of Kuwaiti families prepared packages filled with chocolate, sweets and non-food supplies to be presented to American soldiers in Iraq.

Al-Qabas reports that Kuwait invited GCC foreign ministers for an emergency meeting in Kuwait on April 7 to discuss developments in the region.

Al-Qabas reports on April 6 that the Kuwait stock exchange has reached record levels for the second time this week.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports on its front page on April 6 the denial by Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmad of rumors of the death of the Amir.

## Editorials:

### 13. "The People of Al-Najaf Defeated America"

Abdelatif Al-Duaij wrote in independent Al-Qabas (4/5):

"The image of American soldiers retreating from Al-Najaf must remain in the Arab and Muslim memory. The people of Al-Najaf practiced their right of rejection that led the American forces to retreat in respect of the people's will. Later, the people of Al-Najaf welcomed the American forces when they realized that they were not against the Iraqis, but rather are there to confront the tyrant. This is democracy. The people of Al-Najaf did not throw stones at the Americans, and the Americans did not fire a bullet. The American soldiers expressed their respect for the holy sites. [W]hen will the Arabs defend their holy sites, instead of defending their dictators?"

14. Conservative Dr. Sami Khalifa wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (4/5): "In light of the marginalization of the Iraqi opposition, the targeting of Iraq's infrastructure and the suffering of the Iraqi people. [w]e have no other choice but to ally ourselves with the other Arab and Muslim nations to condemn American insensitivity for practicing this scorched earth policy before toppling the Iraqi regime."

### 15. "Who to Believe?"

Ahmad Al-Dayeen wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (4/6):

"[British Prime Minister] Blair stated that the UN will play a major role in the reconstruction of Iraq, while we heard the Deputy US Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz state that the UN could play the role of facilitator. [W]e notice that there is a discrepancy between the two countries, and that leads me to wonder who to believe?"

### 16. "A Peaceful Word in a Boiling Street"

Editor-in-Chief, Jassim Boodai, wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (4/3): "Arabs and Muslims have the right to demonstrate against the strikes on Iraqi civilians and against American double-standard policies. The Arab Street has the right to refuse to believe the Americans who started their campaign by eliminating Iraq's WMDs, and proceeded to develop their goals to eliminate the Iraqi regime, then to remove national governance of Iraq after toppling the regime and replacing it with an American military governor. The American's final step is to obliterate all maps of the region by announcing the planning of a new Middle East. The turmoil in the seething of the Arab Streets is justified, but the split of tracks between reality and slogans only serves the US in the long run. We have to say a peaceful word to a boiling street. Help the Iraqis and do not help their regime. Help the Iraqis establish a democratic national system free of WMDs and foreign military presence. As for what is taking place now, it only serves the current Iraqi regime and the coming American military presence."

### 17. "When Will Al-Sahaf Admit Defeat?"

Lawyer Jamal Al-Kandari wrote in independent Al-Watan (4/6):

"Today's war is different from previous wars. Television correspondents today are in the heart of the battlefield. They monitor and report every movement of the [American] army. [Iraqi Minister of Information] Al-Sahaf denies much of this news. When the coalition forces took Umm Qasr, he stated that the city is resisting. The same scenario happened in Al-Basra and other cities and places. Al-Sahaf will continue his denials and lies until the day the [coalition] forces reach him and take him to Guantanamo Bay."

JONES